

OPERA AT COVENT GARDEN

BARON D'ERLANGER'S "TESS," A NOVELTY OF THE SEASON.

A Talk With the Composer—The Production Received With Interest—London Conservatism—Covent Garden Peace and the Metropolitan's Turnout.

LONDON, AUG. 14.—A noon visit to the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, is by pathways of decaying vegetables and faded flowers which mark the close of the market's busy day and through strata of odors that make the far famed Cologne seem quite sterilized in comparison. As you pick up your skirts and mince gingerly along, with handkerchief held to the face, it is difficult to believe that you are near the famous cradle of song.

Used to the contrasts of London, where a narrow alley which suggests Avenue may lead to a palace, you are prepared for the sudden appearance of a row of imposing, smoke grimed pillars fronting the huge building that dwells in insignificant surroundings. It has passed through many changes and chances

it, for you, being a New Yorker, may be used to the energy displayed in the office of the home opera houses during the height of the season at midday. You recall them at the moment as anthills of industry, a dozen telephones ringing, office boys and girls darting hither and thither, agents, impresarios and others in a wedglike mass, all demanding a hearing, and on the outside a fringe of babel dwellers who have come to hand in their resignations or to revoke those of the day before. There is actually no moment when in your memory you can refer to peace brooding above the porticos as it seems to brood here at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden.

As you step from the street into the main foyer you discover a solitary porter with a long necked watering can giving the row of potted plants their morning bath. He looks at you sleepily and continues his task. At the little window a youth is trying to book a stall, interrupting to do this the reverie of an old gentleman with gray beard who has charge of the sale of seats.

A leisurely mannered employee takes your card and leaves you to rest for a long time on a velvet seat which occupies a comfortable corner. You have an



BARON D'ERLANGER, THE COMPOSER OF "TESS."

and apparently has only grown a bit grimmer in the process.

It has survived its environment, for the fashionable dwellings and historic landmarks that once were its neighbors have passed into strange hands and strange uses. A boxing club occupies the one time Evans Rooms of Thackeray's day, and in Maiden Lane, also close by, where Turner was born, you will find it difficult to discover any one who remembers further back than the murder there a few years ago of William Terrie. But in St. Paul's church, which still like the opera house resists the invader, you may stop and get your breath, noting the resting places of Samuel Butler, author of "Hudibras," William Wycherley, author of "The Country Girl" and other comedies; Sir Peter Lely and Charles Macklin, the actor, who lived to be 107.

It is well for you to make this detour to prepare your mind for the shock awaiting



THIS IS THE WAY TO THE BUSINESS OFFICE, COVENT GARDEN.

A WOMAN AMONG FLAMINGOS

VACATION OF A NATURALIST'S WIFE IN THE BAHAMAS.

She Accompanied Her Husband to Take Pictures of the Birds—A Thrilling Time in the Rookery Habits of Flamingoes Studied From Near By.

"About the most exciting vacation I recall was the time I went with my husband to hunt flamingoes with a camera," said a young married woman whose husband is a professor in an Eastern college. "When a girl marries a naturalist she must be prepared to do queer things, you know. I was so thoroughly prepared that when my husband decided to go to the Bahamas in a camera hunt for flamingoes he begged me in as a matter of course. It was two years ago last spring, and though we had been married two years I had made my record as his first assistant, especially when it came to handling a camera.

"Not only were we able to get a wonderful collection of photographs of these birds but for four whole days we sat among their nests so near that it almost seemed possible to reach out and stroke the back of the nearest flango as it sat on its nest.

"Thrilling? It wasn't so thrilling as it was when we were in doubt as to whether they would return when we set up our blind in the midst of their rookery. That was exciting enough to make my heart beat loud enough for the birds to hear that they remained seated comfortably in their nests.

"Though we left for the Bahamas early in April it was the first week in May before we found an occupied rookery. On our arrival the negro who had acted as our guide reported that he had already spotted an occupied rookery and was eager to conduct us there at once. My husband was equally eager, and the fact that it was raining in torrents did not hold him back a minute. It was the rainy season, so we had made all necessary preparations, but it did seem a bit lonesome setting out that first day with the water coming down in bucketfuls.

"When we reached the place it was only to find that the rookery had been deserted and literally cleaned out by a party of negroes the day before. Every young bird and egg had been taken off and the old birds had flown away, never to return. It was a bitter disappointment to us both.

"There seemed myriads of them to my untutored eyes, but my husband computed only about fifteen hundred in the whole rookery. This he told me was by no means a large rookery for the Bahamas. The rookers had left neither eggs nor fledglings in any of the nests which we examined, and they had broken down many nests and trampled over others.

"During the following eight days—all dull and cloudy, with gusts of wind and through muds, creeks and lagoons on the lookout for an occupied rookery. The nights were passed in camp, which was moved on as fast as my husband and our guides decided that the neighborhood had been thoroughly covered.

"On the ninth day early in the morning one of the two guides with us sighted flamingoes. An exciting quarter of an hour followed this announcement, as neither my husband nor the other guide would agree that the faint line of color that the first guide pointed out was flamingoes. Fifteen minutes hard rowing brought us near enough to make sure with the use of our glasses that the birds were really there and in great numbers.

"Next came the question of how the birds would behave. Would they allow us to land and sit at work among them or would they stream off never to come back again?

"Of course both my own and my husband's eyes were fastened on the wonderful stretch of color marking the rookery. While we were quite three hundred yards away the great birds began to stand up and their loud honking call was very distinct. Another hundred yards nearer and the entire rookery rose as at a signal and streamed off, one great flaming cloud. It was here that my husband began to use his camera, but I, firm in my faith in the birds' love of home, was sure I would have better opportunities.

"As we were landing only about thirty yards from the edge of the rookery the flamingoes stood around us swinging back over the rookery settled down in a shallow lagoon not far to the windward. We set up our two blinds and covered the side next the rookery with palm leaves and green boughs. As soon as this was accomplished our two guides went back to camp on a narrow strip of shore a few miles from the rookery.

"Now this was when the real excitement began. It was an anxious moment. After the boat had gone more than 500 yards I heard my husband sigh.

"I whispered to him, though the birds were so far away that I might have shouted without their hearing even the sound of my voice.



MME. EDVINA, WHO HAS MADE A SUCCESS OF "LOUISE" IN LONDON.

tinguished and pleasant manner.

Although he has achieved a moderate success with other published works he is boyishly pleased at the reception accorded "Tess" in the three hearings already had.

Before speaking directly of "Tess" he gives a rapid summary of his other compositions, which include "Noel," which is shortly to be produced at the Opéra Comique, Paris; "Inez Mendez," produced at Covent Garden in 1896; a pianoforte quintet and a violin concerto which was played last winter in America and elsewhere by Mischa Elman and in England by Fritz Kreisler at a Philharmonic concert.

"Tess," says the composer, "was first produced at the San Carlos, Naples, on April 10, 1906, under the direction of Mr. Panizza, who has conducted it here and is a member of our regular staff. This first appearance was interrupted by the last great eruption of Vesuvius, and with falling buildings, clouds of lava dust and the noise and terror of panicking people it is not remarkable that it dropped out of sight and hearing for a while, to be revived last autumn in Milan.

"The libretto is by Luigi Illica and is based on Thomas Hardy's Wessex novel, 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles.' The English version of the libretto is made by Claude Aveling.

"Although we broke the record of attendance on the opening night and in the royal box were Queen Alexandra, Princess Victoria and Prince Christopher of Greece, who were most enthusiastic, I was more delighted with the interest and satisfaction of Thomas Hardy himself than with anything else or than I can express. Mr. Hardy came from his home in Dorchester to be present at several rehearsals and the premiere. He expressed unqualified praise of the music and considered the dramatization of the novel very effective.

"It is not usual that an author can witness the necessary eliminations and changes that have to be made to fit a story for the operatic stage without some sentiment of regret, and if Mr. Hardy experienced any it was surely not visible. His commendation was most

appreciative and his comprehension of the difficulties more kindly expressed than that of some of the critics, who do not seem to realize that to use the entire story as it is, so fertile an incident would require a trilogy at least.

"The story of the opera ends in the bridal chamber of Tess, where the confession to Angel Clare is made, and after his refusal to forgive in the song 'My Soul Rebels, It Cannot Pardon,' Tess goes out to commit suicide.

Every one agrees that the setting of the various scenes is admirable. The archaic settings of some of the Royal Opera House productions are curiously inefficient to American eyes trained to expect the best; but no criticism other than commendatory can be written of the scenic pictures of "Tess."

The first view is of Blackmoor in the early hours of a bright May day. There are the Durbeyfield farm, the hayloft, the tumbledown wagon, the shambling old horse which looks out patiently from its shed. It is half after four and the clock from the village steeple announces the fact. Beyond the foreground is an exquisite perspective of the Wessex downs fading away into soft distances.

"The first scene is spoiled to me in a way," says the composer, "from the presence of the old horse, which is really one of the standbys of the Covent Garden equipment. Although perhaps not quite so celebrated as Frau Vogl's, which knew his Wagner operas so well that it is said that when it heard the motif in 'Götterdämmerung' it made haste for the funeral pyre with its beautiful burden, still our quadruped can boast that when it once gets on the stage—as for example when it leads the warrior crowd in 'Faust'—it is loath to depart and goes 'round and round' until you would think it would become dizzy and drop from vertigo.

"In only its long ago salad days there is a story, absolutely disbelieved by the old attachés of the opera house, that the horse attempted to break its thrall and bolted down Bow street among the larks-purs and lilies, overturning rose stalls and cabbage heaps, until it was captured

and brought back. If it should have a return of this demoniac cheerfulness to-day I should not weep, for notwithstanding my affection for it I have always believed that the appearance of any animal on the dramatic or operatic stage is a great mistake.

"No matter how hard we try to produce the appearance of realism we cannot succeed perfectly. There must always be some artificiality, a degree of illusion. Human beings have to make up for the footlights no matter how crudely natural the stage settings may be and the action of the plot must conform to the rules of exits and entrances.

"But you can do nothing with an animal. It comes on without makeup, without illusion and never fits admirably into the picture. It holds the eye to the exclusion of everything else, and if not for the part of the audience that it may escape and cause damage, there is certainly curiosity as to its movements, and this all detracts from the force of the play or opera.



JOHN MCCORMACK, THE IRISH TENOR, WHO IS TO SING AT THE MANHATTAN.

"Even in the subordinate matter of scenic arrangements the old time subscriber to the Covent Garden Opera Company loves to see best of all the stage settings with which he is familiar. Conservative in everything, conservatism in opera seems to be part of the Londoner's creed, so I have been especially gratified that this season we have been able to put on several novelties and to have them well received, 'Tess' among them.

"There is certainly a change in public sentiment here. In America I understand the situation is quite different; that a new operatic work is always received with interest and an impressive air always count on an audience who if

they have no other motive than curiosity will attend urged by that impelling force. Quite a contrary state of affairs prevails here.

"People will not come to a new work. If it is advertised they stay away, as they do in many towns and cities of northern Germany—Hamburg, for example. They display no curiosity, no interest. They will not run the risk of being bored.

"This is the first season here that we have been able to give 'Samson et Dalila,' on account of its Biblical libretto, I suppose, which has handicapped its production in the past, the directors not believing that it would have a success sufficient to warrant its presentation. It has been tremendously well liked and has been produced more times than any other."

Before he hurries away to keep an engagement Baron d'Erlanger speaks in the highest terms of the work of Miss Emmy Destinn, who takes the name part in his opera.

"She makes an ideal Tess and says that

she loves it," he says. "Her beauty fits admirably into the picture of peasant surroundings, and she looks at home in the charming farmyard scenes."

One of the singers at Covent Garden this season was Mme. Edvina, who was heard in "Louise." She is a Californian, but has been in this country so many years that she is usually considered an English woman. She is a sister-in-law of Lord Kensington and a pupil of Jean de Reszke.

Oscar Hammerstein has engaged John McCormack, who has sung here for the last three years. His voice is a light tenor and very pleasing. He has sung *Alfredo* in "Traviata" principally this year. He goes from here to Naples before sailing for America. Temperamentally he is very Irish and does not worry about anything, not even his salary. He may, however, suffer a sea change, as so many artists do.



THIS WAY TO THE BUSINESS OFFICE, METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE.

TOWN MESSENGER A WIDOW

NEW ENGLAND WOMAN'S WAY OF EARNING A LIVING.

She Is Ready to Buy Anything From a Cambric Needle to a Draught Horse—A Chance for Other New England Women to Do Work of the Same Kind.

"It is some ten years now since I began to earn my living as town messenger," a New England woman, a widow in middle life, replied to the reporter's request to talk about her means of supporting herself and her children. "Though I can't claim to have made a large fortune it has enabled me to live in comfort and send all my children through high school."

"Yes, I own my home. I paid for it myself and have a few hundred dollars in bank, which I am glad to remember whenever a member of my family is not as well as he might be."

Her work consists of calling for any great amount of brains or any special talent. Anybody, man or woman, could take my place and do as well by my customers as I do by merely taking pains and being careful to keep promises.

"I fill orders for everything from the finest cambric needle to the largest size draught horse. Last spring I heard of a horse in town for sale cheap. He was a huge fellow and sound and good except for a sore on his back. I told the man who supplies the town with ice and coal about the horse and he said that if I thought the horse's chances of getting cured of the sore back good he'd give me his check and I could bring him out."

"It was a large responsibility even for a town messenger, but I accepted it, just as I had taken an order for six dozen hooks and eyes that same morning from the man's wife. That night I delivered them both, and the horse suited better than the hooks and eyes. The man was willing to rest the horse up and doctor him, but his wife was not willing to use hooks and eyes that were not stamped with the name of the particular manufacturer she wanted."

"Oh, yes, I got the same commission for buying the horse and the hooks and eyes. My charges are ten cents for each order, regardless of size, and the only difference is when express or freight charges have to be paid. I often make as much as \$20 a day, but all the year around I count on averaging \$4 a day, six days a week, earning in the first two days a day in the summer, but in the winter, except around Christmas, I seldom go in oftener than twice a week."

"I do not get a commission on the goods I buy from my customers. By that I mean that the reduction they allow goes into the purchaser's pocket, not into mine. I have found that it is not good business to work for two masters. I began that way, because the man who had been messenger before me did business so. After a few weeks I was convinced that it was a mistake. People were always suspecting me, and I could not find out I could get the largest commission regardless of the price or quality."

"I now have a bill made out for each article bought and the purchaser sees just what was paid for it. I am sure this gives me many more orders than I would otherwise get and leaves less room for complaint and suspicion. The method did cut down my earnings at first, but it was not long before my books showed more and larger orders than the former messenger had ever received."

"There is an opening for just such a messenger in every village and small town in New England. Many places have such messengers, but as a rule they are men. I am the only woman so far as I know who does such work."

"I have fitted out every variety of house, from a portable summer cottage to be used on the beach to a blacksmith shop with an automobile and bicycle repair department. Oh, no, I only get ten cents for buying an automobile. On the other hand, I get ten cents for each article with which the summer cottage is furnished. Each article means an extra selection and that is what I charge for."

"The work has paid me much better than keeping summer boarders has my neighbors and is far pleasanter and more profitable than taking in plain sewing would have been."

AUTOPIST ON A PETRIFIED MAN.

A Cardiff Giant Swindle That Came to a Sudden End.

MACON, Mo., Aug. 10.—Not very long after Barnum's Cardiff giant went into history some young men appeared at Lancaster, Mo., with the petrified body of a man which they said they found on their father's farm in Iowa while ploughing," remarked Judge Edward McKee of the First district, who was here to-day.

"The young men were exhibiting their petrified man in a tent, charging 10 cents admission. To the large and keenly interested crowd they explained that while working in the field one day the plough struck something hard, supposedly a rock. The ploughman stooped down to remove the obstruction, but could not. He called his brother. By their united efforts with shovels they uncovered the rock, which turned out to be a petrified man, perfect in every outline. A great many people came to the tent and identified the remains as a neighbor who had gone off to the war, returned home and mysteriously disappeared. A mark under the eye and some peculiar scars in the back were the main marks of identification, the speaker said, and there was no doubt that the soldier had died and turned to stone."

"A large man who had been listening thoughtfully for some time when the description was finished.

"You are sure that's Jim?—he asked.

"Certainly," said the speaker; "my father told me well; he has positively identified him."

"Know how he came to his death?"

"No, sir, it's a mystery."

"Then he held an inquest?"

"In response to the amazed exclamation from the owners of the petrified man the inquest explained that he was the prosecuting Attorney of the county and that it was his duty to hold an inquest in all cases where death was mysterious. The boys protested, but in vain. They tried to get out of town with their exhibit, but were arrested and put under bond. The petrified man was laid out in state and the coroner summoned. He brought a mallet along. The crowd was immense, for this time the show was free."

"If there's anybody here who knows how this man came to his death he will please come forward," said the prosecutor.

"Nobody responded, for the boys had jumped their bond."

"Then I will make a post mortem examination," said the coroner, picking up his mallet.

"He tapped the petrified soldier along-side the head. It rolled round and round like a baby on a doll rack when the thrower hits the bullethead. Then he tapped an iron rod into the petrified man's chest, because an iron rod ran through the center. The other arm performed the same way under the coroner's scientific manipulation."

"What to you and was the cause of death, doctor?" asked the prosecutor.

"Too much iron in the system."

"Without another word he picked up his mallet and left the petrified chamber. The petrified man was patched up and sold to a traveling speculator for \$50, which just about covered the costs of the inquest and the attorney's fees. The petrified man was patched up and sold to a traveling speculator for \$50, which just about covered the costs of the inquest and the attorney's fees. The petrified man was patched up and sold to a traveling speculator for \$50, which just about covered the costs of the inquest and the attorney's fees."

"SHE BAN KOOM BACK."

Story About a Barn Insured Against Tornadoes, and Another Story.

"Our company," said Mr. Carleton, "is rather liberal in the matter of risks. We take not only the usual fire insurance risks in cities and rural regions, but we insure against various acts of God and man that are cut out by most companies. Tornadoes and other storms are among the things against which we protect the farmer."

"About the beginning of the cyclone season in Kansas last season we got a letter from a farmer in Kansas saying that a big wind had come along, lifted his barn from its foundation and set it down on the other side of the creek. It was not damaged, he wrote, but he didn't want it there. He would have to build a strong bridge to move it back on, and he wanted to know what we were going to do about it.

"We sent word to one of our adjusters to go and see him on his way back. When our man drove up to the barn he noticed that the barn, house and all the other buildings were on the same side of the creek and he began to think that the farmer had framed up a job on us. He found the farmer out in a field, made himself known and said he had come to see about that barn."

"She ban koom back," said the man, who was a Scandinavian.

"The adjuster was puzzled and asked him what he meant.

"Ay say she ban koom back again," the farmer replied.

"Then the farmer took our man in a slab punt and paddled him across the creek. A little way beyond the bank the ground was torn up and in one place where the second tornado left it, and he struck it cornerwise."

"There's where she ban," said the farmer, pointing to the ground.

"How did you get her back?" our man asked.

"She ban koom back herself. Ay say," the farmer replied.

"Then he told our man that on the day after he sent us a letter another tornado came up from the direction opposite to that from which the previous twister had come. It picked up the barn, whirled it around a few times and set it down on the foundation from which it had been taken."

"Our adjuster went to see the barn and found it resting apparently just where it had been built. He remarked to the farmer that setting it back was a pretty accurate job. The man explained that the barn was a trifle out of line where the second tornado left it, and he had to get some neighbors and a jack-screw and push against one of the corners a little."

"Glad to get out of the matter so easily, our man asked what the damage was. The farmer pondered a few minutes and said the cost of his help and the use of the jack-screw and a few pounds of tennery nails was about \$4.50, which the adjuster settled on the spot."

"There was a rather amusing sequel to this incident," said Mr. Carleton. "Before our man started East we got a

MISSING BAIT HAWKER.

Flight of Those Who Go Down to the Banks to Fish.

More important even than the captain of the ship are the men who go along to the fishing banks with the angling steamer having bait.

The bait hawker has to get aboard the boat like all the rest. One day last week he failed to appear and a steamer left him behind. Aboard the boat were many anglers who had not brought any bait, thinking they could buy it of their friend on the boat. Nobody seemed to miss the bait man until the steamer was well out to sea, when the report spread that he had not boarded the boat."

The only thing for the anglers to do was to approach the captain. When the captain was surrounded by forty fisherman, all raving, he had to do some sharp calculating. He knew that off the Sandy Hook light many smaller boats troll for blunfish and lingcod after telling the fishermen to have patience the boat was headed for the light. Here the bait was limited, and only half of those lacking were caught. This being all that the captain could do in the matter, the boat proceeded on to the banks."

On arriving at the banks some of the wiser ones started in selling bait at a big price. Of course no true angler would refuse to fish after preparing his lines and hooks the night before, so the sellers of bait got their pay."

NEGRO'S SKIN TURNED WHITE.

Physicians Interested in the Case of Uncle Jacob Thomas of Leroy.

LEROY, N. Y., Aug. 10.—Physicians of this place are interested in the case of Jacob Thomas, a negro who turned white.

Thomas was a civil war veteran and up to twelve years ago was blacker than the average negro. About that time white spots began to appear on his skin.

These spots increased in size until Uncle Jacob, as he was called, was one large white spot and easily passed for a white man. With the change of color he grew weaker and died a few days ago. The physicians attribute the change in complexion to a degenerate change in the blood corpuscles.

"There has been no increase in the sale of our colored glasses," said an optician in town, asked about the matter, "in spite of the talk about the actinic rays this summer. There has not been a summer in recent years without some story about the actinic rays and their bad consequences."

"At one time people were wearing yellow glasses to counteract their effect; one oculist gave his patients amethyst glasses; and at another time the only kind of glasses that did any good were said to be violet glasses. But the people who kept on wearing their ordinary glasses seemed to have just as comfortable eyes as those that tried all these novelties."

"During the following three days we went back and forth between the blind in the rookery and our tent on the beach with about the same experience. The birds would fly away on our approach and return once they had made sure our guides were well off. Excepting the day we set up the blind, they returned while the boat was still in sight. They never took the slightest notice of our blind."

"As flamingoes always build their nests on open muddy washes, where the only vegetation is a few stunted man-